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SUBJECT: Goma Report October 3: Belligerent
Statements, Quiet Battlefield

¶1. (SBU) Summary: North Kivu has had its fourth quiet day militarily October 3, even while Nkunda has called for national liberation, and FARDC claims an imminent CNDP attack, for which North Kivu brigade sees no evidence. The little ceasefire augurs well, but the belligerent language augurs badly, for military or political dialogue. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) The ceasefire held on October 3, for the fourth straight day without any exchange of fire in any of the four sectors around the CNDP territory, nor any significant move of forces by either side observed by the North Kivu brigade. However, FARDC's General Mayala warned North Kivu brigade commander Rawat on the morning of October 2 that FARDC had information that "CNDP was massing for a large offensive" against the newly-held FARDC position at Tongo, as well as near Rutshuru and Masisi, and that FARDC would have to react to "protect itself."

¶3. (SBU) Mayala made this warning before Nkunda's BBC interview, broadcast on the afternoon of October 2. Mayala repeated it to Rawat October 3. North Kivu brigade continues to observe no significant CNDP build-up. Humanitarians who recently traveled through CNDP territory in Masisi and Rutshuru also did not notice signs of any military build up. Rawat noted to poloff October 2 that when either side speaks of imminent attacks by the other, such language often means it is about to attack the other. Rawat said he was blunt with Mayala, that if FARDC commenced further attacks, North Kivu would leave FARDC entirely to its own fate and could expect no assistance from MONUC. He also made it clear that FARDC's continued occupation of Tongo was an extremely serious violation of the disengagement plan and impediment to dialogue and that North Kivu brigade had confirmed that CNDP had withdrawn from both Kanombe and Himbi Height in the Rutshuru corridor.

¶4. (SBU) In Nkunda's telephonic interview with BBC October 2, Nkunda said that an extraordinary congress of the CNDP had occurred the previous day, which had decided that CNDP would transform itself from a movement of "revendications" (demands) to one of national liberation. Reflecting recent CNDP statements, it characterized the Amani program as dead (citing in this case the change of government in Kinshasa). BBC interpreted the interview to mean that CNDP had changed its name (to Mouvement de Liberation Totale du Congo, or Mouvement de Liberation Totale de la Republique).

¶5. (SBU) CNDP spokesman Bertrand Bisimwa affirmed to Deputy Eastern Coordinator M'hand Ladjouzi October 3 that CNDP had not changed its name, but only expanded its focus to national liberation. There has been much speculation in Goma whether the interviewee really was Nkunda, as several francophones who had previously met Nkunda say the interviewee did not sound like Nkunda. However, Bisimwa assured Ladjouzi that the interview was indeed with Nkunda. It is not known where Nkunda was during the telephonic interview, nor where the claimed congress took place. General Rawat personally helicoptered to Kiroliro and Kitchanga on October 2 to investigate whether anyone there had recently detected Nkunda or any significant CNDP

military or political movement, with nil evidence of either.

¶16. (SBU) Such pronouncements (Defense Minister Chikez and even Father Malu Malu have also made unhelpful statements) send a chill over efforts of the previous days to coax both sides toward dialogue. General Etumba, in separate conversations with Ladjouzi and EU representative Dumont before departing to Kinshasa September 30, had seemed convinced that there was no military solution and amenable to conducting talks on the disengagement plan with CNDP. In several telephonic contacts with CNDP (variously, Abandi, Bisimwa, Muiti, and Kambasu), Ladjouzi had communicated FARDC's desire to have dialogue. CNDP had given Ladjouzi a positive, if noncommittal, response. British representative Pravda had also apprised CNDP of the arrival October 4 of EU Special Envoy van de Geer and his desire to meet Nkunda (with of course no response yet from Nkunda).

¶17. (SBU) Meanwhile, for the first time since the Task Force of the Joint Monitoring Group began its weekly meetings in Goma last December, the Rwandan delegation called poloff on the evening of October 2 (before the scheduled meeting October 3) to say that it could not come to Goma due to insecurity. (It also cited lack of progress in combating FDLR.) In fact, Goma is quiet, and the Rwandan delegation was willing to come in previous weeks when the situation in Goma was much more precarious. The meeting has been rescheduled for October 4 across the border in Gisenyi. More will follow in a separate cable.

¶18. (SBU) As part of MONUC's efforts to sensitize belligerents on the ground of the disengagement plan, francophone officers traveled to the western sector October 1 all the way to Kashuga (which on

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August 28 was the furthest northwest point of CNDP control). They found that CNDP was not present and that the officer in charge of a group calling itself "Mai Mai Mongol" was in fact FDLR. They came to this conclusion, since the officer went on at some length, in Kinyarwanda, about the political claims of FDLR. (Note: There had been earlier varying reports that PARECO was in control, or that CNDP had regained control, of Kashuga.)

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